

# Archdiocese of Cardiff



## Inspection Report

### Saint Michael's Catholic Primary

<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>25 – 27 March 2019</b>
<b>Reporting Inspector</b> <b>Accompanying Inspector</b>	<b>Mrs J Phillips</b> <b>Mrs S McCool</b>
<b>Type of school</b>	<b>Primary</b>
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	<b>3 -11</b>
<b>Number on roll</b>	<b>240</b>
<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Newport</b>
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	<b>Mr Peter Landers</b>
<b>School Address</b>	<b>Baldwin Close, Newport, NP20 2LW</b>
<b>Tel. no.</b>	<b>01633 262078</b>
<b>E-mail address</b>	<b>stmichaelsrc.primary@newport.gov.uk</b>
<b>Parish served</b>	<b>All Saints Parish, Newport</b>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	<b>July 2011</b>
<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Mrs Jill Manship</b>

## Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archdiocese of Cardiff and Inspection of denominational education under Section 50 of the Education Act 2005

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on prospects for improvement.

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice or practise that is both consistent and highly effective.
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The table below shows the terms that Archdiocesan inspectors use and a broad idea of their meaning. It is for guidance only.

<b>Proportion</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>With very few exceptions</b>	<b>Nearly all</b>
<b>90% or more</b>	<b>Most</b>
<b>70% or more</b>	<b>Many</b>
<b>60% or more</b>	<b>A majority</b>
<b>Close to 50%</b>	<b>Half/around half</b>
<b>Below 40%</b>	<b>A minority</b>
<b>Below 20%</b>	<b>Few</b>
<b>Less than 10%</b>	<b>Very few</b>

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Archdiocese of Cardiff Schools website: [www.rcadcschools.org](http://www.rcadcschools.org)

## Context

St Michael's is a voluntary aided Catholic Primary School in the Archdiocese of Cardiff. The school is situated in the old dockland area of Pillgwenlly near the town centre of Newport. The school celebrated its centenary in 1999. A new building came into use in 1988. The parish church, St Michael's is within walking distance of the school.

The school caters for children aged three to eleven years. Nursery children attend on a part time basis with 32 children on roll in Nursery. The socio-economic background of pupils is varied, including a significant minority of economically disadvantaged families. At the time of inspection, 242 pupils were on roll including nursery (210 excluding Nursery). This was made up of 49% Catholic pupils, 22% pupils of other Christian denominations, 7% pupils of other World religions and 21% pupils of no faith. Approximately 27.5% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Around 12% of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs (ALN) including one pupil with a statement of special education need (SEN). Around 60% of pupils are of white British ethnic origin, with 40% from other ethnic backgrounds. A significant number of pupils (40%) come from homes where English is an additional language. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language. Two pupils are 'looked after' by the local authority.

The headteacher was appointed in January 2014. The Religious Education Co-ordinator took over her role in 2012. Of the 9 full time and 1 part-time teachers, 5 are Catholic and 1 holds the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. 7 of the 13 learning support assistants are Catholic.

The school has achieved the 3rd Healthy Schools Award, Platinum Flag, Communication Friendly Status, and Fair Achiever status.

<b>Summary</b>
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<b>How effective is the school in providing Catholic education</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Catholic education at St Michael's school is good because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a Catholic ethos permeates all aspects of school life;</li><li>• standards in Religious Education are good;</li><li>• the school is a welcoming and inclusive community with a central goal and shared vision;</li><li>• effective and high quality pastoral care promotes the wellbeing of pupils;</li><li>• there are very positive relationships between pupils and staff;</li><li>• partnerships with parents, the parish, the local community and the wider world are well established.</li></ul>	
<b>What are the school's prospects for improvement?</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The school's prospects for improvement are good because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the headteacher embraces the Catholic ethos of the school, is very caring and has the knowledge and vision to develop the school as a Catholic learning community;</li><li>• the governing body is committed to the Catholic ethos of the school and to ongoing school improvement;</li><li>• the Religious Education Co-ordinator works efficiently and effectively and has a good understanding of her role and clear vision for the continued development of Religious Education;</li><li>• children enjoy Religious Education and are happy to express their views and opinions;</li><li>• teachers are open to professional development and to improving their own practice.</li></ul>	

## **Recommendations and Required Actions**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- R1: Ensure all staff participate in appropriate training and view best practice in order to further develop and enhance collective worship throughout the school.
- R2: Further develop Assessment for Learning throughout the school to include success criteria, enabling pupils to identify the next steps in their learning and take responsibility for moving aspects of their own learning forward and improve attainment.
- R3: Develop opportunities for independent learning to ensure pupils benefit from a more creative approach to encourage active participation and self-directed learning and are given the opportunity to develop and present their own ideas with greater imagination and fluency.
- R4: Build on existing practice and further develop the Catholic Pupil Profile throughout the school.

### **What happens next?**

The school will submit a Post-Inspection Action Plan to the Director of Religious Education that shows how it will address the recommendations. Submission should be within 45 working days of publication of the report. Progress in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by the Archdiocese.

## **Main Findings**

<b>KQ1. How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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St Michael's is a warm, welcoming and inclusive school and this is reflected in the school's mission statement 'We aim through the experience of a caring and learning community to nurture an awareness of God's love for each one of us as an individual and as part of the wider world'. This is prominently displayed throughout the school and said at the start of day and during assemblies.

Pupils at St Michael's display an interest in and have a positive attitude towards Religious Education. Most pupils make expected progress relative to their starting points and capabilities. They are becoming more religiously literate and their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriately to their age or capacity.

Pupils attitude to learning is good and as a result standards overall are good. Pupils are keen to do well and most pupils work well when provided with appropriate tasks and guidance. Lesson observations indicated there was limited opportunity for independent learning to support higher level attainment. The use of digital technology observed in some Religious Education lessons was limited. Its use should be further developed to support and enhance all pupils learning.

Pupils' positive response to the topic of Lent resulted in a good understanding of key vocabulary in the Foundation Phase and development of a good understanding of Lenten Gospel readings and parables at KS2. Most pupils are developing the skills to think ethically and spiritually and confidently used formal and spontaneous prayer to develop their relationship with God.

A book scrutiny indicated that standards in Religious Education are comparable to those displayed by pupils in English. There is a range of written evidence which includes letters, prayers, diary entries, story sequences and posters showing full coverage of the Explore, Reveal and Respond elements of the Come and See topics.

Pupils are proud to belong to the school community of St. Michael's and take on responsibilities through the Chaplaincy Group and CARE Group. They show respect and consideration for visitors, the local community and each other through Harvest Festival celebrations and giving hamper donations to the local nursing home. The CARE Group ensures everyone has a friend on the playground and feels safe and secure in school and the older pupils help younger pupils with their religious learning. The Chaplaincy Group articulated a plan to establish a 'Mini Vinnies' group in the school in the near future. These activities offer real opportunities for pupils to understand ways in which they can show support for others, be considerate and make a positive difference in both the school, local community and the wider world.

Prayer and worship are important to the life of the school and the legal requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship is fully met. The themes are consistent with the Catholic character of the school and celebrate the liturgical life of the church, reflect

the Come and See themes and are relevant to the lives of the pupils. There are weekly opportunities for children to plan and lead class collective worship and the pupils articulated how much they enjoyed these experiences. The worship observed during the inspection was variable and all staff would benefit from Diocesan training, and viewing best practice in other schools, to develop pupils' experience of a sense of awe and wonder in worship.

There are opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities which support their all-round development through after-school club provision. Teachers and pupils are developing their use of the Welsh language and this was evident throughout the school.

<b>KQ2. How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of teaching observed is good. In most lessons observed pupils listened attentively to their teachers and settled quickly to tasks. Teachers were secure in their subject knowledge and used questions well in order to promote learning. Pupils co-operate well with each other and enjoy and benefit from positive relationships with all staff. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support individual pupils and groups of pupils throughout the school.

The best lessons observed were well-placed and responded effectively to the needs and abilities of learners through differentiated tasks. However, in some lessons there was an over-reliance on worksheets and limited opportunity to develop independent learning. Pupils would benefit from a more creative approach to encourage more active participation and self-directed learning and the opportunity to develop and present their own ideas with greater imagination and fluency.

The school uses the 'Come and See' Religious Education programme which is recommended by the Archdiocese of Cardiff and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.

The Catholic Pupil Profile and regular Christian meditation sessions are implemented in all classes. These continue to be a focus for further development and currently pupils and staff are working together to develop the attractive 'Virtues' display in the entrance hall.

During the inspection, lesson observation indicated that teachers shared the learning objective of the lesson (WALT) with all pupils but often this objective lacked clarity or focused on the task rather than learning. There was little evidence of pupils discussing success criteria or using the driver words and the language of the level descriptors to self- and peer-assess to move their learning forward. The consistent use of success criteria would benefit all pupils in assessing how well they have met the learning objective.

The quality of work observed in the children's books overall is good. Books are marked regularly and comments are encouraging. KS2 pupils sometimes use the 'purple pen

of progress' to respond to the teachers' remarks and all books showed evidence of the use of a traffic light system to indicate the level of support they required when completing tasks.

All teachers were confident in their use of digital technology and used it well to support their teaching: for example, moving pictures, music and website platforms were integrated effectively to enhance lessons. Observation of pupils using ICT to support Religious Education learning was limited. , However when observed, for example, writing Vlogs, letters and sending emails to their teacher that explained the Beatitudes, pupil engagement and motivation in lessons increased. The use of digital learning should be fully developed in Religious Education lessons throughout the school.

The school uses tracking system for Religious Education which identifies standards of attainment in the school and this data is used to monitor pupil achievement in Religious Education.

Worship is central to the life of the school. It underpins daily school life and reflects the school's Catholic ethos and values. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school and pupils visit St Michael's parish church to celebrate Mass on feast days and Sundays as well as for termly school/parish Masses.

Displays and reflective focus tables highlight the liturgical seasons, promote gospel values, virtues and attitudes. They stimulate pupils' interest in Religious Education, invite pupils to reflect and engage in prayer and are valued by the pupils. The creation of a prayer garden in the grounds offers a calm and peaceful atmosphere and provides opportunities for personal prayer and reflection.

Parents' response' to questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive and highlighted their support for the Catholic ethos of the school, the contribution of the headteacher, the care shown by the staff in school and the impact they have on their children's faith journey.

Pupils' Religious Education voice is demonstrated by the Chaplaincy Group and CARE Group members. Pupils were very proud of their roles and responsibilities within the school and the impact their decisions have had on the school and in the community.

The school works closely with St Joseph's Catholic High School in facilitating transition arrangements. Frequent references were made to events and activities undertaken jointly by pupils of the school including the Cluster Concert. The school has a strong commitment to inclusion and this is reflected in daily classroom practice and support.

<b>KQ3.How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The school is led by a dedicated headteacher who, together with the governing body and Religious Education Co-ordinator positively promotes Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school. The head teacher displays great commitment to her role and she has the knowledge and vision to develop the school as a Catholic learning community with the support of all staff. She was appointed in January 2014 and is

ambitious for the life and the work of the school. With the support of the Senior Leadership Team, the Religious Education Co-ordinator, governors and staff, the monitoring and evaluation programme will make an impact on pupil outcomes and the quality of provision

Governors understand the mission of the school and they are committed to reflecting the distinctive Catholic character of the school in decision-making and policies. They discharge their statutory and canonical responsibilities. Governors are well informed and knowledgeable about the school's strengths and further areas for development. They are regular visitors to the school and provide appropriate challenge to the headteacher and senior leadership team.

The diligent and committed Religious Education Co-ordinator discharges her duties effectively. She has introduced Archdiocesan initiatives, the Catholic Pupil Profile and Christian meditation and successfully monitors and evaluates standards and the Catholic life of the school. These initiatives are beginning to make a positive impact on standards and spiritual development within the school.

The newly appointed Religious Education link governor is keen to be actively involved in the self-evaluation process. In her short time in post she has joined the Religious Education Co-ordinator for lesson observations, carried out a learning walk and viewed pupils' work. The chair of the governing body is a regular visitor to the school, supporting the staff to secure improvements in Religious Education.

Leaders, managers and staff offer pastoral care and guidance to enhance the well-being of the pupils and their families. The school has received training for the Sex and Relationship programme 'Fertile Heart' to develop healthy and safe attitudes, including an understanding of family life, consistent with the teaching of the Catholic Church and are planning lessons for the summer term.

The partnership with All Saints parish is strong. The link priest from the parish is regarded as an important member of the whole school community and ensures that the school is firmly at the centre of the Church community. The school supports the work of the parish in sacramental preparation.

The inclusion of all is a central goal and shared vision of the school. Community cohesion is a strength and the use of Diocesan Parenting Resources a priority. There is a strong sense of belonging and all are welcomed in a spirit of equality. Leaders and managers respect difference, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. Relationships between members of the school community are good with a strong ethos of support, commitment and team work. There is effective provision for pupils to develop their understanding of their role in society. Pupils are informed about sustainability and global citizenship. The school enjoys a good reputation within the local community.

## **Responses to parent questionnaires**

33 parental responses were received from parents and 6 parents attended the parents meeting.

Parents are overwhelmingly happy with the values and attitudes that the school promotes and with the help and guidance available to their children. Many parents agree that the school enables their children to develop spiritually through prayer and worship.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Evidence Base**

- Pre-inspection team consultation
- The school's self-evaluation reports and other relevant documentation
- Meetings with the head teacher and Religious Education Co-ordinator
- Meetings with representatives of the governing body
- Discussions with the parish priest
- A meeting with parents
- Lesson observations
- Scrutiny of planning and assessment
- Scrutiny of pupils' work
- Scrutiny of prayer foci and displays
- Attendance at whole-school and class-based acts of worship
- Discussions with the Chaplaincy Group and CARE Group
- Discussions with pupils
- Discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff
- Parent questionnaire returns
- Observation of daily routines